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INTERNAL - POLITICAL

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1. Leadership. The announcement of April 6 that the convening of the new Supreme Soviet had been postponed from April 10 to April 23, was the principal subject of speculation among diplomats and foreign newsmen in Moscow during the week. On the day of the announcement, the usual "reliable sources" began to spread the word that KHRUSHCHEV had the grippe and that this was the reason the session had been delayed by nearly two weeks. In fact, the First Secretary was absent when other members of the Communist Party's Central Committee Presidium made ceremonial appearances on April 2, at the final concert of the III Composers' Congress, and April 6, at a meeting in the Bolshoi Theatre in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of A. I. HERZEN. He was reported as having received the Polish Communist leader Zenon KLISZKO on April 4. His next public appearance was at a Kremlin meeting on April 12, which celebrated Cosmonautics Day on the first anniversary of Yuri GAGARIN's epochal orbital flight. While he did not speak, he was reported by observers who attended the meeting as apparently in good health.

The state of Khrushchev's health thus did not appear to be a sufficient motivation for the unprecedented step of postponing the opening of the Supreme Soviet session.

Speculation on the real reasons for the postponement ranged over the whole spectrum of current Soviet policy preoccupations. The continuing silence in Peiping on what was being said and decided at the National People's Congress, together with some slight signs of movement in Sino-Soviet relations; the disarmament, nuclear-testing, and German questions; and the problem posed in connection with establishing the Union Agricultural Committee at the peak of the pyramid of new bodies created under the reorganization decreed by the March 5-9 Central Committee plenum -- these and others were considered singly and in combination as possibilities. At week's end, however, the mystery was no closer to solution than it had been immediately after the announcement was made on April 6.

In Khrushchev's absence, six full Presidium members, BREZHNEV, KOZLOV, KOSYGIN, KUUSINEN, POLYANSKY, and SUSLOV, one candidate-member, GRISHIN, and three secretaries, DEMICHEV, ILYICHEV, and SHELEPIN, attended the Herzen sesquicentennial meeting. Kosygin and Polyansky also found time that evening to drop in at a reception in the Finnish Embassy on the occasion of the 14th anniversary of the Soviet-Finnish Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual assistance. On April 7, Kosygin received a Cuban trade delegation and Brezhnev presided at a Kremlin ceremony during which Orders of Lenin and other decorations were bestowed formally upon a number of prominent Soviet personalities. He also received the letters of credence of the new Tunisian Ambassador. On April 9, a delegation of the CPSU Central Committee, headed by Shelepin, flew off to Budapest. The group was seen off at the airport by Demichev and CC section chiefs Yu. V. ANDROPOV, Ya. I. KABKOV, and A. S. PANYUSHKIN.

Among other events that seemed worth noting was the April 5 resignation of T. D. LYSENKO "for reasons of health" from the Presidency of the All-Union Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences, a post he had resumed as recently as

August 8, 1961, after a five-year gap. Lysenko was replaced as Academy President by the All-Union Minister of Agriculture, M. A. [illegible], perhaps in a move to provide him with a comfortable berth [illegible] and if he is replaced as Minister upon the establishment of the Union Committee on Agriculture at the Supreme Soviet session which begins April 22.

A crescendo of propaganda devoted to Soviet space achievements culminated in the "Day of Cosmonautics", April 12, the celebration of which had been decreed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on April 9 (Pravda, April 10). The principal event of the day -- which was not a public holiday -- was a "workers' meeting" in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Kuusinen, MIKOYAN, Suslov, and, making an appearance for the first time since March 16, 74-year-old N. M. SHVERNIK were on hand. Khrushchev's name was not listed, according to the customary fashion, with theirs, but, in Pravda's report, preceded theirs, being grouped with those of Gagarin and Herman TITOV. Speakers at the meeting hailed Khrushchev in terms reminiscent of those used at the XXII CPSU Congress. The Chairman of the Moscow City Executive Committee, N. A. DYMAY, spoke of him as "the outstanding fighter for peace and Communism, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, who lifted high the great Leninist banner" and concluded his short speech with a "Long live our own /rodnaya/ Communist Party and its battle staff -- the Leninist Central Committee headed by Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev!". Gagarin called Khrushchev "a selfless fighter for peace and Communism" and expressed "deep gratitude to our Party, its Leninist Central Committee, and personally to Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, for their ceaseless concern for the strengthening of the might of our beloved Homeland, for the welfare and happiness of Soviet people." Titov was accorded the honor of having his speech interrupted by one of Khrushchev's interjections. The First Secretary underlined the point that "the first builders of Communism are the peoples of the Soviet Union". Titov, too, thanked "dear Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev" for his daily attention to the development of Soviet cosmonautics.

All in all, it was a week typical of the post-XXII Congress period, leaving an impression of mid-stream indecisiveness and incompleted policy pondering.

2. A Voice from the Past: the Munters Article. On April 7, Izvestiya devoted an entire page to an interesting and puzzling "letter to the editors of Izvestiya" by Wilhelm MUNTERS, the Foreign Minister of pre-war Latvia. The article was well and reasonably written, in a style reminiscent of easier days -- Munters was educated in pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg -- and appeared, on its face, to be aimed primarily at reconciling both Latvian emigres and the non-Party intelligentsia at home to the permanence of the little country's incorporation into the USSR. Other aspects of the article and the fact that it was first published in Izvestiya and appeared in Sovetskaya Latviya and Cina, the Russian and Latvian language Riga newspapers, only three days later, on April 10, cast some doubt on this hypothesis as an adequate exclusive explanation and made Moscow observers wonder just what had prompted its commissioning and the devotion of a full page of the Government newspaper to it.

Among the other points made by Munters, there was discreet criticism of Soviet policy on the eve of the Second World War and of STALIN's harshness towards the population of Latvia in 1940, when the USSR made Soviet Republics

of the Baltic States, and again in 1944-45, when the Red Army reoccupied them. Munters mentioned the mass deportations of Latvians in the post-war years and, while claiming that "justice" had now been restored in the country, made it clear that this sort of treatment had been unjustified and excessive.

Munters' treatment of these events of the Stalin era coincided with the publication in the official journal of the USSR Supreme Soviet of a decree repealing the awarding of decorations to Colonel-General I. A. SEROV and other high police officials for their "services" in the deportation of the North Caucasian peoples in 1944 (Embassy's A-800, April 13). Apparently all the officials decorated, with the exception of Serov, have since been shot in the purges of BERIYA and his "accomplices". Serov himself was dropped from the Central Committee of the CPSU at the XXII Party Congress and was not re-elected to the Supreme Soviet in the March 18 elections.

Munters also argues strongly against the feasibility of a neutral belt of small states between the Baltic and the Adriatic and the German and Soviet borders and condemns neutrality, collective security, and the United Nations as possible saviors of small countries from the destruction of a nuclear war.

The rationale for Izvestiya's commissioning and publication of this interesting article is thus hard to fathom. The reader asks himself, "Why Munters, why Izvestiya and what is the real message?"

[redacted]

3. More Show Trials in Prospect. The Soviet press continued to underline the continuing enforcement of the February decrees imposing the death penalty under certain conditions for rape, bribery, or a threat to the life of a militiaman or druzhinnik. In recent weeks, there has been an increasing amount of publicity about both individual crimes and crime in general. The regime is seeking to "educate" and warn the public through these spectacular releases.

One of the more spectacular cases to be aired in the press is that of the Frunze gang, a group of 54 whose number included textile executives and workers, economic officials of the Kirghiz SSR, and CP members. The abusive language of a March 25 article in Sovetskaya Kirgiziya suggests that some of the ringleaders in this 30-million-ruble case will be sentenced to death under the new decrees (Embassy's despatch No. 912, April 13).

Another recent case is that of Akhmet Dokayevich KHALADOV, who, according to Kazakhstanskaya Pravda (April 8), let a ring that cheated the state out of two million rubles. Khaladov, former head of a warehouse of the Karaganda Geological Expedition, was said to have aroused suspicion by loading two

automobiles and six vans aboard a train when he left for his native Chechen-Ingush Republic. Sentence in this case has not yet been passed.

A Moskovskaya Pravda item of April 8 revealed that confidence games and illegal trading in scarce goods persist in the GUM department store in Moscow despite the vigilance of 300 druzhinniki on patrol there. The article concludes hopefully that eventually the druzhinniki will drive the "speculators" out of GUM, but also reveals that one of the culprits recently caught selling home-made records in the record department turned out to be a druzhinnik himself -- off duty.

Application of the new, severe penalties is evidently far from uniform. Sovetskaya Latviya (April 6) tells of the sentencing to death of a recidivist thief and burglar, Matvey BALNAS, in Riga, for assaulting and robbing a female factory cashier of 14,000 rubles. On the other hand, in the town of Dzhalal-Abad, in the Kirghiz SSR, according to an item in Sovetskaya Kirgiziya (April 3) one KARASARTOV, a candidate member of the CP, is still free after severely beating, kicking, and biting a police officer several months ago in the course of a drunken brawl. Karasartov was said to have used his Party and family connections in a successful effort to have a three-year sentence set aside.

The extent of the regime's concern with economic and other crime and irregularities in enforcement of the laws is indicated by the publication during the week in newspapers throughout the Soviet Union of the proceedings of a "regular" plenum of the Supreme Court of the USSR. The report of the proceedings emphasized the necessity of differentiating more clearly between ordinary crimes such as theft and "very dangerous" offenses such as speculation and the misappropriation of state and social property. Judges were urged to "educate" the public and arouse popular opinion against such crimes by trying them in the localities where they occur. The courts are, in effect, enjoined to hold further show trials and deal out more death sentences in an effort to intimidate potential wrong-doers.

4. German Colony in Kirghiz SSR Holds Fast to Religious Beliefs. An anti-religious article in Sovetskaya Kirgiziya (April 4) revealed the existence of a stubbornly religious colony of Germans in Chuyskiy Rayon of the Republic. Lutherans of Staraya Pokrovka village disturbed peaceful atheists at Christmas by singing carols, and celebrated the New Year by discharging shotguns. The article complains that not a single atheist lifted a finger against these activities, but goes on to say that the newspaper, Neues Leben (presumably the Moscow-German-language publication) published an article about sectarians in the village of Thaelmann that led to the organization of "atheistic evenings" and the closing of the sectarians' church. An atheist schoolteacher from Tokmaksk, Ivan Ivanovich VORMSBEKHER, is quoted as complaining that the fierce sectarians of Thaelmann are again "raising their heads."

5. "Go-Karting," a New Soviet Sport. Among the sports encouraged by the civil defense organization, DOSAAF, is the new one of "Karting," which caught on last year in Latvia and rapidly spread to other parts of the USSR. An article in Nedelya, the weekly supplement of Izvestiya (April 1-7, 1962), explains that the little skeleton automobiles are called "go-karts" or

"motocars" in various countries where they are popular, that "go-kart" racing is a standard sport in Hungary, East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and that the first formula "K" races will take place in the Soviet Union in the fall of 1962. Nowhere in the article is credit given to the United States for originating this sport, although an American, Bob ALLEN, is said to have won the world championship last year in Italy.

EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

6. Berlin/Germany. With the exception of a burst of criticism directed against RIAS, the Soviet press has virtually ignored Berlin. RIAS was the object of a feature commentary in Pravda (April 4), which repeated the standard Soviet complaints that the station is a cold war instrument directed against the "socialist camp." The station was again singled out in a Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn commentary as one of the symbols of the "remnants of the Second World War" which must be abolished. It also was made the subject of a subsequent Red Star cartoon. This sudden attention to one of the favorite targets of Soviet propaganda during the 1959 Geneva Conference suggested that the Soviets may revive the campaign against various elements of the Allied position in West Berlin as background for possible new negotiating initiatives.

7. Cuba. Pravda on April 11 published a three-column commentary on CASTRO's March 26 speech in which the purging of old line Cuban Communist ESCALANTE was announced. The Pravda article endorsed Castro's attacks against Escalante personally but avoided revealing Castro's more sweeping charges against old Communist militants. While Pravda stated that Castro's measures are in full accord with the decisions taken by the Moscow Conference of Communist Parties, are "dictated by life itself," and referred to Castro as "comrade," the article made it clear that the new IRO is not a full-fledged Communist Party. Pravda explained that the formation of this body is "a step toward the formation of a united party founded on Marxist-Leninist principles."

The Pravda article appeared to be an effort to quiet any Soviet public concern over the fate of the Cuban Communist movement. At the same time, however, nothing in the article suggested that the Soviets intend to abandon their basic interest in having Castro expand his influence in Latin America, even at the cost of sacrifices within Cuba by the Cuban Communist Party.

8. Soviet-Finnish Treaty Anniversary. The Soviets gave prominent attention to the fourteenth anniversary of the 1948 Soviet-Finnish Treaty and left the general impression that relations with Finland are currently satisfactory. Izvestiya commented that relations are now better than ever before and praised Finnish support for atom-free zone in Northern Europe. Other papers listed KEKKONEN's re-election, his visit to Novosibirsk, and the exchange of visits by MALINOVSKY and BJOERKENHEIM as reflecting the harmonious state of relations. The exchange of greetings between Khrushchev and Kekkonen and MIETTUNEN was published in all papers and the Finnish Embassy reception was honored by the attendance of a large Soviet delegation led by KOSYGIN and POLYANSKY.

9. Nuclear Testing. [redacted]

Reactions to the joint US-UK statement on testing, delivered to the USSR on April 9 and released the next day, also served to focus attention on the subject of testing. The Soviet press merely quoted the last sentence of the statement to the effect that testing would be resumed by the US and the UK if the Soviets did not agree to a workable test ban treaty. Soviet commentators went on to charge that the statement had the ring of an ultimatum and that it represented a diversionary propaganda maneuver designed to soften world criticisms once atmospheric testing was resumed.

While Soviet commentaries reasserted that national means of detection were adequate for the identification of all nuclear tests, they never addressed themselves to the problem of verification, which has invariably been treated fuzzily in the Soviet press. At the close of the week, there was a hint in the press that the Soviets might support a possible neutral move at Geneva calling for a moratorium pending an examination of the adequacy of national means of detection.

10. Outer Space. The subject of outer space was widely treated in the Soviet press over the past week to mark the anniversary of Gagarin's historic flight. Soviet space achievements were invariably cited as evidence of a highly progressive society led on and guided by Marxist-Leninist principles. Beyond this, however, material appearing in Pravda frequently stressed the desirability of US-Soviet cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Thus, for example, Pravda of April 12 carried a joint article by Gagarin and Titov in which the two astronauts asserted such cooperation would serve to improve Soviet-American relations, lessen international tensions, and create favorable conditions for the peaceful settlement of pressing world problems such as disarmament. Khrushchev's letter to President Kennedy of March 20 was generally referred to in enumerating areas in which joint space efforts might be directed.

In a conversation with an Embassy officer, an official of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that cooperation in outer space could serve as a symbol for improvement in US-Soviet relations and perhaps serve as a touchstone for progress in other areas.

MILITARY (ARMY)

1. Flood Conditions in USSR. Red Star reported on April 10, 1962 that the Military District of Moscow utilized several planes to handle the flood problem on the OKA River south of Moscow. Helicopters were used for evacuation of some 20 workers. In another case an ice jam was actually bombed.

2. CUSARMA travellers returning by rail to Moscow from Budapest via Chop report that the border fences on both the Hungarian side (north of Zallony) and the Soviet side (south of Chop) were almost completely inundated on April 5 by the swollen Tizsa River. The river had overflowed its banks for 150 yards on either side at the rail crossing point at approximately 22°11'E 48°21'N. Many other rivers and streams in the Ukraine were at flood levels on April 5-6.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

Boris H. Klosson
Counselor for Political Affairs

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